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PICTURES *from* NATURE.

IN

20

NINETEEN SONNETS.

TO WHICH IS ADDED

THE LOCK TRANSFORMED.

THE SECOND EDITION.

By the Reverend RICHARD POLWHELE,
AUTHOR of THE ART OF ELOQUENCE. R

EXETER:

Printed by R. THORN;

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LONDON.

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PICTURES FROM NATURE

NINETEEN SONNETS

TO WHICH IS ADDED

THE LOCK TRANSFORMED



THE SECOND

RICHARD BOWRING

EDITOR OF THE ARTS AND CRAFTS

EXETER

WILLIAM L. TAYLOR

Printed by J. G. Smith, in the Strand, and J. H. Smith, in the Strand, London

LONDON

THE TWO MILLING

ADVERTISEMENT.

IT has been frequently observed, that genuine poetical Painting consists in the Exhibition of the little Particularities of an Image; and that it is only in the Power of appropriate and distinctive Coloring, to bring it, as it were, immediately before our Eyes. This Remark very evidently accords with the true Idea of the SONNET; the Intention of which is chiefly to fix the Mind to the Contemplation of an Object, presented in its most striking Attitudes, and marked by its more pleasing Peculiarities. Such an accurate Inspection of those Parts of Nature which deserve Imitation, is frequently as engaging to the Poet, as microscopic Observation to the Philosopher. Poetry, on a larger Scale, where a Variety of general Images must be introduced, and sometimes in rapid Succession, will not always display to Advantage so particular a Delineation; while the smaller Pieces of Composition seem absolutely to require the minuter Touches of the Pencil. And as the Sonnet should consist of a single Image illustrated by its more pleasing Appendages, it is here that an imitated Object may best be contemplated, at Leisure, under all its little Forms of Beauty. Hence perhaps some latent Attribute may be drawn forth, which may diffuse over it an Air of Novelty. In this Light, the Sonnet seems peculiarly turned to the Beautiful; and perhaps (in the Province of the Beautiful) the more picturesque Objects of still Life.

With Respect to the Structure of this little Composition, the Italian Method is no longer punctually adhered to; and a considerable Latitude seems to be allowed. The Author therefore, though not inattentive, in general, to the more authorized and legitimate Mode, has endeavoured to produce Specimens of various Construction. And from the flattering Reception his first Efforts have met with, he is encouraged to hope, that his present Collection is not unworthy of Attention. The Suggestions of the periodical Critics* he has regarded as candid and

* See the "English and Critical Reviews" for May, and the "Gentleman's Magazine" for June, 1785.

and liberal ; and his Sedulity in removing the Imperfections they have noticed in a more important Production than the present, must argue, that he is neither tenaciously attached to Error, or fastidiously neglectful of Critical Animadversion. Their Encouragement, in Addition to that of his literary Friends, hath at length prevailed on him to discover his Name, which he should otherwise have concealed. The following Pieces are a few of those little Effusions, which, in the Moments of Feeling or poetic Enthusiasm, have flowed, as it were, spontaneously from his Pen. And it is by no Means to be wondered, that the picturesque Beauties with which he is surrounded, should have furnished Allurements to his Muse. They well merit the first descriptive Pencil. And what alone prevents him from attempting to exhibit them, in one Collective and comprehensive View, is an Apprehension, that, by aiming at extensive Delineation, he should betray his own Weakness, and disgrace a Subject which far surpasses his Abilities.

KENTON, JANUARY, 1786.

TO

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
LORD VISCOUNT COURTENAY,
AS A SINCERE, THOUGH HUMBLE TRIBUTE
OF REGARD
TO HIS ELEGANT TASTE AND PICTORESQUE IMAGINATION;
AND
OF GRATITUDE
FOR HIS VERY LIBERAL ENCOURAGEMENT OF THE PROJECTED
PUBLICATION OF
Theocritus, Bion, Moschus, Tyrtæus, Musæus,
and Orpheus, in an English Dress,---

THESE LITTLE PIECES
(The Result of the Author's Residence amidst the Beauties of Powderham)

ARE INSCRIBED
WITH UNFEIGNED RESPECT,

By his most Obedient
And most obliged humble Servant,

RICHARD POLWHELE.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

LORD VISCOUNT GORTERRA

Sin, HAS ne possim NATURÆ accedere PARTES,

Frigidus obstitit circum præcordia Sanguis ;

Flumina amem, fylvasque INGLORIUS !

WITH UNDESIGNED RESPECT

By his most Obedient

And most obliged humble Servant

RICHARD POLWHELE

SONNET the FIRST.

To LAURA. *Written 1782.*

SURVEY, my LAURA, yonder Rose,
Its central Folds so sickly-pale;
While round its outward Leaves disclose
A lively Crimfon to the Gale!
Yet as the secret Canker-Worm
Preys inly on its fainting Heart;
From the cold Floweret's fallen Form
Shall all that Glow of Color part!
Ah! on thy Lover turn thine Eyes—
The blooming Cheek may LAURA see!
Yet know this pining Bosom dies—
And read the Rose's Fate in me!

SONNET the SECOND.

*On being prevented, by a sudden Shower, from meeting LAURA.
Written 1782.*

LO yonder Clouds in Envy lower,
And dark'ning, shade the golden Hour
In which, fond Hope with eager Eyes
View'd Sun-bright Streams, and azure Skies;
And sweet as Hebe's self portray'd,
To bless the Scene, a blooming Maid!
But soon the Visions disappear
To airy Hope and Fancy dear!
And see how little can destroy
The Prospect vainly form'd for Joy;
When ah! the Gloom that frowns away
In wide Expanse the Orb of Day,
Can veil, my LAURA, from the View
Thy fairer Orb of Beauty too!

SONNET

SONNET the THIRD.

To his WIFE. Written 1784.

FOR thee, whose Love I value more than Life,
 Whose Charms the Balm of Heart-felt Bliss inspire—
 For thee I reassume my humble Lyre,
 Here—in this Shade, far distant from the Strife
 Of Scenes, where Fashion's pamper'd Votaries, rife
 In Diffipation's Revel, quench thy Fire
 O Muse! and blast the hallow'd Name of WIFE
 'Mid the dark Orgies of impure Desire—
 For thee, tho' ne'er my unambitious Strain
 May soothe the unfeeling World, I yet awhile
 Tune the rude Shell! and haply, not in vain,
 If (sweet Reward of every anxious Toil)
 My simple Song have still the Power to gain
 From LAURA, but a fond approving Smile!

SONNET

SONNET the FOURTH.

To the same. Written 1784.

AMID this* Scene of varied Beauty plac'd,
 Where Nature's wild Simplicity, refin'd
 To Prospects that might charm ev'n MASON's Mind,
 Veils the fair Art, which lives in COURTENAY's Taste;
 Let us, my LAURA, no vain Wishes waste;
 But to the humbler Lot of Life resign'd
 Be ours, when Evening's pensive Shadows haste
 O'er the dark Trees and paler Lawn, to bind
 Contentment's modest Wreath around the Brows
 Of wedded Love, that fighting, oft renews
 The Memory of its fondly-storied Vows;
 Or smiling on the Day o'erpast, reviews
 Each Joy the Wife—the Mother can impart,
 To rivet, in Esteem, the Husband's Heart!

* The Pleasure Ground of Powderham.

SONNET

SONNET the FIFTH.

Written at Mamhead, beneath an Evergreen Oak—May, 1785.

HERE, LAURA, since our wearied Feet have stray'd
 From the proud Obelisk that fronts the Scene
 Of many a tufted Hill, whose bolder Green
 The sweet Perspective blends in mellow Shade;
 While, sparkling thro' the stately Fir-trees, play'd
 The burnish'd Hamlets of the Vales between,
 And while the misty Bosom of the Glade
 Seem'd opening to the azure Sea serene—
 Here, LAURA, let us rest our roving Eyes,
 And near this ever-verdant Oak repose;
 For lo, unharmoniz'd yon' Prospect lies,
 And dim-discovered Views the Landscape close;
 Yet clearer Beauties on the Lawn arise,
 And, in full Pride, the shadowy Foliage flows!

SONNET

SONNET the SIXTH.

Written at the Belvidere—Powderham, May, 1785.

AS Morn's grey Mift, with Skirts of Rainbow Dyes,
 Rolls off, yon' opening RIVER points my Sight
 (Its Wave amid the Hills one Line of Light)
 To where the antique *Cathedral Turrets* rise!
 And *there*, the rich Varieties surprize
 Of LANDSCAPE, stretching wide round *Halldown's*
 Height
 That seems, in scenic Pomp, to reach the Skies,
 Each Object, thro' contrasted Shadow, bright!
 And *here*, beyond these dark'ning Firs, that close
 Where slopes the *castled Park's* smooth Turf away,
 The dancing BILLOW to the Sun-beam glows;
 Whilst Harmony, her Magic to display,
 Soft o'er the blending Whole her Coloring throws,
 Yet leaves the THREEFOLD SCENE distinct as Day!

SONNET

SONNET the SEVENTH.

O CIRCLE, whether erst the Lightning's Lance
 With its keen Azure shot thy wavy Way;
 Or—such the Tales of Village-Maidens fay—
 The merry Fayses (what Time their Troops advance
 To thread the fleeting Mazes of the Dance,
 While bends dim Iris in the Lunar Ray)
 Form'd, as they tripp'd with many a twinkling Glance,
 Thy Ring, to speak their Revels to the Day;
 Still fancying, lovely CIRCLE, that I trace
 Amid the Features of thy fading Dyes,
 The little Footsteps of the Fairy Race—
 Still, 'round the springing Verdure, shall arise
 In soft Relief, thy gently-curving Grace—
 Too trivial but for fond poetic Eyes!

SONNET the EIGHTH.

HOW sweet—what Time the quick-rekindling Day
 His orient Colors on my DOVE-COT streams,—
 Whose Gilding blushes in the vivid Ray,
 And o'er my Window flings reflected Beams;
 How sweet to listen to thy cooing Note,
 While slumbers softly leave the unsealed Eye,
 And on my Pillow lights the placid Thought
 To bid the hovering Dream of Morning fly!
 Yes, gentle DOVE! may still thy plaintive Tone
 Be the first rural Sound to meet my Ear!
 And still this Breast such simple Pleasures own
 That, as a Lesson, I may love to hear—
 And picture, with no Gall to give Offence,
 Wafted on every Note, thy Innocence!

SONNET the NINTH.

THO' the group'd Trees that boast a wilder Grace,
 Steal from the Painter's Art their varied Site,
 And their rich Mass of Shadow and of Light,
 Where Nature's seeming Negligence we trace;
 Yet, ye long AVENUES, of awful Height
 And mystic Air,—shall Fancy dare efface
 The hoary Grandeur of your Gothic Race?—
 While spreading a Cathedral Gloom, unite
 Your Pillars, in immeasurable Shade,
 With the dim Arch, that waving to the Beam
 Of sportive Day, for Ages, hath portray'd
 The restless Image of a billowy Stream
 Shot on the "chequer'd Earth,"* whose Walks below
 Dance to the cheated Eye, with undulating Flow!

* This beautiful Image is borrowed from Mr. Cowper's "Task."

SONNET the TENTH.

VIEW'D thro' this beauteous VISTA, where the Bloom
 Of flowering Ash disparted to the Day,
 Bade from the Cloud the Sun's emerging Ray
 Some Moments past, my root-wove Seat illume,
 And let the brighten'd Landscape thro' the Gloom,—
 How many a pleasing Object pass'd away!
 The dim Sail, while the Branches scarce gave Room
 On the calm Wave its Glimmering to survey;
 And, where fleet Shadows floated o'er the Lawn,
 The scatter'd Sheep that cross'd my charmed Eye;
 And near that Hill, its fidelong Mists withdrawn,
 The Hawk that pounc'd to Earth—then hover'd high;
 And yet more near, the little playful Fawn
 Amid those silver Alders, frisking by!

SONNET

SONNET the ELEVENTH.

THO' now pale Eve, with many a crimson Streak
 Soft-fading, tips the Lime-invested Hill;
 And tho' blue Steams emerging from the Lake
 Roll curling on, and hover o'er the Rill;
 The SMOKE, that slow evolves its pillar'd Form
 From yonder Straw-roof'd Cottage, sweetly throws
 O'er my hush'd Bosom a superior Charm,
 And seems to breathe a cherub-like Repose!
 With its grey Column to yon' sapphire Cloud
 Stealing in Stillness, the calm Mind ascends—
 The unruffled Line, tho' lost amid the Shroud
 Of Heaven, in Fancy rising, never ends!
 Thus ever may my tranquil Spirit rise
 Free from the Gust of Passion—to the Skies!

SONNET

SONNET

SONNET the TWELFTH.

SAY, favorite Shades, beneath whose laurel Vest
 The wild Rose blushes, and pale Woodbines flaunt—
 Say, why no longer vocal, tho' the Haunt
 Erewhile, of many a little warbling Guest;
 Where musing oft, my charmed Ear was wont
 (As peep'd the callow Finches from their Nest)
 To listen to the Parent's Song, and rest
 On each sweet Trill, and bid vain Care avaunt—
 Ah! whilst no more the gold-ting'd Artift weaves
 His mossy Fabric with assiduous Bill;
 Tho' round the rich Luxuriance of the Leaves
 And Flowers, the Breeze with lavish Odors fill—
 Ah, for such artless Music, Fancy heaves
 Full many a Sigh, amidst a Pause so still!

SONNET the THIRTEENTH.

GO, Limner,—if with Autumn's varied Realm
 The mimic Canvas e'er presum'd to vie—
 Go, mark the Leaves of that Time-hollow'd ELM
 Which steal thro' many a Teint, to fade and die.
 Say, as the wildest of the sylvan Scene,
 That Elm collecting each autumnal Hue,
 Waves the pale Vesture of a faded Green
 Shot with Heaven's Lightning, to the bleak East View;
 Mild o'er its brighter Leaves while Zephyrs blow;
 To the drear North while browner Dyes unfold;
 And softly sprinkled 'mid the Boughs below
 The shadowy Purple mellows into Gold—
 Say, has thy happiest Pencil e'er pourtray'd
 Such mingled Colors, so reliev'd by Shade?

SONNET

SONNET the FOURTEENTH.

SEE the light Breeze the quivering Aspin stirs,
 Whose snowy Bark and yellow Foliage throw
 Their mingled Glimmering thro' the russet Row
 Of stripling Oaks, and Green-invested Firs!
 Yet Fancy, with delighted Voice avers,
 That to the Muse's Eye new Beauties flow;
 For, as the Charms of melting Color glow,
 The sweet Delusion of the Scene is hers!
 And see that Cloud empurpled sails away,
 And on its soft and fleecy Fragments steal
 Faint lilac Tints, while now the westering Day
 Scarce flings, amid this variegated Vale,
 Thro' yon' cleft Rock, a twilight-tinctur'd Ray
 To meet the feebler Glance of Hesper pale!

SONNET the FIFTEENTH.

LORN Birds! whose simple Minstrelsy, the last
 That Nature pouring on the pensive Ear,
 Bids echoe back her vernal Songs o'erpast,
 And breathe a Requiem o'er the closing Year—
 Ah, who could think, while Pity loves to steal
 From every Cadence of your melting Strain,
 Ah, who could think such little Breasts could feel
 Ungentle Strife, or work each other Pain?
 And yet, tho' seeming Harmony of Heart
 Flows in the Sweetness of each charming Note—
 Oft from the bitter Fray ye bleeding part,
 Torn the stain'd Plume, and pierc'd the vocal Throat!
 Beneath the fairest Aspect of Disguise
 Alas, too oft the cruel Bosom lies!

SONNET the SIXTEENTH.

WHILE not a Wing of Insect-Being floats,
 And not a Murmur moves the frozen Air;
 Yon' Ice-clad Sedge, with tremulous Wave, denotes
 Amid the leafless Copse, that Life is there.
 And lo, half-seen, the Bird of ruffet Breast
 And duskier Pinion,—that had cleft the Skies
 Of wild inhospitable Climes, in quest
 Of the warm Spring,—his plashy Labor plies.
 Feed on, poor Bird, beneath the sheltering Copse;
 And near thee may no wanton Spaniel stray!
 Or rising, when dim Eve her Curtain drops,
 Ah! may no Net arrest thy darkling Way!
 But long unpent by Frost, o'erflow the Rill—
 And many an Insect meet thy delving Bill!

SONNET

SONNET the SEVENTEENTH.

*To Mr. PRATT, on reading his "LANDSCAPES in VERSE."**Written September, 1785.*

WHILST with luxuriant Pride the "LANDSCAPE" flows
 That speaks the Efforts of an Artist's Hand, —
 And (tho' unfinish'd Groupes obscurely stand)
 In rich warm Tints the new Creation glows—
 At Orient Morn, or Evening's mellow Close
 A sweet Elysium, or a fairy Land ;—
 Whilst thro' the Still-Life Scene CLEONE throws
 The Heart's enchanting Int'rest, 'mid the Band
 Of Innocence and Youth and fighting Love
 And rustic Joy ;——shall not my ruder Lay
 (Calm o'er my Bosom if Complacence move)
 To its inspiring Source fond Homage pay ?
 And, tho' unblest by kindred Genius, prove
 That kindred Feeling sheds as kind a Ray ?

SONNET the EIGHTEENTH.

*To the Reverend Mr. WHITAKER, Author of the History of Manchester,
On his expressing his Approbation of the " Art of Eloquence."
Written November, 1785.*

THY Volumes, opening to my curious Gaze
 Their num'rous Pages deepen'd with the Shade
 Of antique Wisdom's mystic Lore, I read,
 While all my Frame the Powers of Wonder seize !
 Yet, rapt in high Delight, I see the Rays
 Of luminous Description oft pervade
 The historic Gloom, when rushes to thy Aid
 Energic Fancy rob'd in solar Blaze—
 —How then (my Bosom yet misgiving sighs)
 How can the Historian, whose sublimer Views
 Far—far above my loftiest Efforts rise,
 The Precepts of Didactic Song peruse ?—
 And with the Candor of approving Eyes
 Light to fair Honors the sequester'd Muse ?

SONNET

SONNET the NINETEENTH.

*Presented to Major DREWE, with a Translation of the Military Poems
of Tyrtæus.—January 26, 1786.*

FORGIVE the Muse, nor deem her honest Line
A Strain, that might betray the Flatterer's Art
Obstrusive ; if assiduous to impart
The Applause which Truth devotes on Merit's Shrine,
She marks the Feeling and the Taste that shine
Fair in thy cultur'd Mind and liberal Heart ;
And hails the Lustre of a SCIPIO thine :
While thro' thy brilliant Page new Beauties dart,
Mix'd with the noble Fervor of a Soul
Where bright the Flame of conscious Honor burns !
And such a Spirit as indignant spurns
Each crouching Slave ; and blots from Valor's Roll
The Homage cold mechanic Duty pays
Too regular for Blame—too dull for Praise !

THE LOCK TRANSFORMED.

Written 1782.

DEAR was the Moment, when the gentle Fair
 Gave to my Wishes with consenting Eyes,
 A LOCK that sever'd from her lovely Hair
 Could soften all my Bosom into Sighs !

And dear those Moments that so sweetly stole
 A Pang from Absence, and impell'd my Lyre
 To wake the fond Emotions of the Soul,
 In melting Ardors and a Poet's Fire !

Then Fancy stream'd her Visions on the Muse,
 And many a transitory Form portray'd,
 Pictur'd ærial Sylphs in vivid Hues,
 And bade their little Wings the Lock o'ershade.

But

But quick their fluid Shapes dissolve in Air,
 And other Beings rise, as Fancy wills—
 Lo drawn by Turtles in her Ivory Car,
 Appears the Goddess of the *Paphian* Hills!

And thus: “ That Ringlet to my Power resign—

“ For from its kindred Tresses tho’ it part,

“ To give it brighter Beauties shall be mine,

“ With all the Skill of imitative Art.

“ What tho’ the fam’d BELINDA’s ravish’d Hair

“ May add new Glory to the distant Skies—

“ Yet shall thy LAURA’s Lock eclipse the Star

“ That vainly shoots, and kindles as it flies!

“ Chang’d to the Semblance of a Female Form

(“ The fairest that a Deity can feign)

“ Can this with all the Glow of Colors warm,

“ Start into mimic Life, to bloom in vain?”

She

She said—and from my Hand the Ringlet caught,
 And sudden to my wondering Sight display'd
 Thy Gift, my LAURA, to a Picture wrought,
 With all the varied Charms of Light and Shade!

And “ here,” she cried, (while round the fluttering Loves
 Breath'd on the roseate Cheeks their softest Blooms)

“ Behold a Nymph, more gentle than my Doves,
 “ Or Zephyr, sighing 'midst my *Cyprian* Grooms!

“ See the pure Spirit of a native Grace
 “ To all her Mien a lovelier Air impart!
 “ And see that meek Expression of a Face
 “ Where in each genuine Look we read the Heart!

“ These speaking Eyes a Charm from Nature steal
 “ Which vainly would the Rhetor's Power supply;
 “ For ah, more sweetly-eloquent we feel
 “ The Language of the never-silent Eye!

E

“ Nor

“ Nor let her *Attic* Robe escape thy View

“ That no vain-tinsell'd Pageantry betrays—

“ Such as the Pencil of APOLLO drew,

“ And *Grecian* Virgins wore, in antient Days!

“ 'Twas then the Spirit of this Nymph divine

“ Shone, to ELECTRA's Bard, in golden Dreams;

“ As oft he woo'd the Favors of the Nine

“ Amidst the Murmur of ILYSSUS' Streams.

“ But ah—how long—how heavily oppress'd

“ While ATHENS moulder'd into Dust, she lay—

“ With *Gothic* Darkness brooding o'er her Breast,

“ That gloom'd the Sweetness of her Soul away!

“ If e'er the Bards of ARNO's oliv'd Vale

“ A wild Note warbled to the penfive Maid,

“ Full soon, unheeding the degenerate Tale,

“ She fled, with many a Sigh, from PISA's Shade.

“ Next,

“ Next, in her favorite Isle, the Harp she strung—

“ The *British* Minstrels triumph’d, as she came—

“ Hail’d her—divine SIMPLICITY; and sung

“ With all AONIA’s Harmony, her Name.

“ Mark then her *Image*, as depictur’d here

“ She gives to Zephyr her *Æolian Shell*;

“ And mark that *Altar*, which low-rising, near

“ Yon’ *Poplar*, crowns the solitary Dell.

“ Glares round its Pedestal no quaint Design;

“ Nor aught that meretricious Art can boast:

“ To Nature rear’d, the unaspiring Shrine

“ Appears, ‘while unadorn’d, adorn’d the most.’

“ Lo there she bids, arrang’d with happiest Taste,

“ The Primrose and the Violet to diffuse

“ Their mingled Sweets, and blend in Union chaste

“ Their Colors sombred o’er by twilight Dews:

“ While

“ While my soft Star, that loves, each Evening Hour,

“ To hover o’er the Stillness of the Dale, *and*”

“ Amid the dim Leaves of the Poplar-Bower *and*”

“ Sheds on the shadowy Shrine, a Lustre pale.

“ From thence no spicy Clouds involve the Skies—

“ Her humbler Offering are yon’ vernal *Wreaths*—

“ And all the Incense of her Sacrifice *and*”

“ Is but the Incense that a Field-flower breathes !”

She spoke—and gave the PICTURE to my Care—

And in the rich Possession call’d me blest !

“ And place it next thy Heart (she cried) for there *and*”

“ That leaving Sigh already tells the rest !

“ Go then—where Imitation’s utmost Art *and*”

“ Has faintly copied (tho’ employ’d by me) *and*”

“ The bright Original that fires thy Heart— *and*”

“ Go—and the living Form in LAURA see !”

F I N I S.

